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ABSTRACT

Clarifications to recommendations made in the Utah Education Reform Committee report, "A Call to Action," are presented in this addendum. Earlier recommendations relating to teachers are revised and clarified and new ones relating to class size, teachers' duties, instructional materials, and the student-parent-school relationship are added. Specific productivity proposals for public and higher education are also clarified. The report responds in particular to calls for greater flexibility and local initiative in implementing the Committee's proposals. (KH)

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Education in Utah: A Call to Action

UD 024 402

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The Making of A Call to Action and The Addendum

On November 11 the members of the Utah Education Reform Steering Committee formally approved and released their recommendations for improving education in Utah. The Committee, appointed in June by Governor Scott M. Matheson in cooperation with legislative leadership, had held a series of public meetings and commissioned a major public opinion poll before dividing into subcommittees to draft its report.

Ten thousand copies of the report and 5,000 brochures summarizing its recommendations were printed using private funds raised by the Committee. On the night of November 30, the Committee held Town Meetings in 11 cities and towns throughout the State. The comments recorded at those town meetings, the results of a questionnaire, the comments of professional organizations, and the views of hundreds of Utahns who wrote or called were sifted and weighed by Committee members prior to their final meeting on December 12.

At that meeting the Committee agreed to issue this Addendum to their report, clarifying several recommendations, adding new recommendations, and summarizing the specific productivity proposals from public and higher education requested in *A Call to Action*. This Addendum responds in particular to calls for greater flexibility and local initiative in implementing the Committee's proposals. The Committee has not fundamentally changed, but rather has clarified and extended its recommendations. The Committee members are indebted to the many organizations, parents, and citizens who took the time to study the report and recommend improvements to further our common goal of strengthening education in Utah.

The Committee stands firm in its conviction that now is the time for action. Study committees have met and submitted their recommendations; in Utah and the nation unprecedented attention is focused on education. The Committee's proposals do not include every good thing that could be done to improve education in Utah. Indeed

Clarifications to A Call to Action

they stop far short of meeting the demonstrated educational needs of our young people. Rather they are the minimum responsible action that must be taken this year. The cost, equitably distributed, will require sacrifice but can be borne without hobbling our economy or imposing unacceptable hardship. The Committee stands by its recommendations as the necessary initial steps to enhance education in Utah for generations to come.

[*Section III,A, Teachers, pp. 10-16, has been revised to clarify the principles underlying the Committee's original proposal of a four step career ladder for teachers. That four step career ladder may be understood as one example of the application of those principles.*]

A. TEACHERS

Few people have such direct impact on the lives of others as do teachers. We should attract more of our most capable people to careers in teaching and retain them. Salaries, while they are not the only factor influencing career choice, are nevertheless a major determinant of the range of careers considered. In 1983 the average annual beginning salary in Utah for non-teaching graduates with bachelor's degrees, as reported to the Placement Center at the University of Utah, was $18,468. In the same year the average beginning salary for Utah teachers with a bachelor's degree was $13,712. Summer employment for teachers rarely makes up for the missing months of professional pay. Furthermore, teachers make far less in career earnings than most other professionals with comparable training and experience. Moreover, the very best teachers receive no more pay than other teachers with the same level of experience and education.

The recommendations on teachers' career development and compensation are the key recommendations of the Committee. If Utah is to change the direction of education, the wage contract schedules currently in use must be modified to designate career levels for teachers and reward teachers for superior performance. Evaluation must be regular, consistent, and fair. We have proposed similar action for principals and supervisors as well. It is imperative that payment for educational services in Utah must be increasingly based on performance as well as upon education and experience and that education must be viewed as a full-time occupation.

In each of the next ten years we will need approximately 2,300 additional teachers. During the past ten years, however, the number of certified teachers graduated annually by teacher education institutions in Utah has declined from 2,620 in 1974 to 1,941 in 1983. Since traditionally only 43% of those certified teach in Utah, that would yield 835 new teachers for Utah this year. Even more disturbing, however, is that new teachers are increasingly drawn from the lower academic ranks of their college and university classes. As the attractiveness of the teaching profession improves, admission standards must also be raised by colleges of education if we are to attract capable students and supply qualified teachers to the public schools.

1. Career Development and Compensation

The Legislature should authorize and fund a program that would allow local districts to establish career ladders for teachers. Districts choosing to participate in this program would develop and submit to the State Board of Education a career ladder consistent with principles established by the Legislature. Guidelines for applying those principles will be developed by the State Board of

Education. After certifying that a local plan is in accordance with the Legislature's principles and State Board guidelines, the State Board would approve the plan and make the appropriate share of career ladder funds available to the district.

The policies and the actual performance of district career ladders would be reviewed periodically by the State Board. Districts failing to meet state standards would receive notice of specified deficiencies. Districts failing to correct these deficiencies within a year or other justifiable, specified period would no longer receive career ladder funds.

An acceptable career ladder should incorporate the following elements which the Committee recommends the Legislature adopt as the fundamental principles of a career ladder:

a) A Beginning Teacher Level at which the new teacher would remain for a minimum of two and a maximum of three years, receiving intensive support and evaluation. Additional training and supervision would be given a new teacher during the first three years. This phase of a teacher's career development would include:

i. Systematic supervision by an assisting teacher and the principal to help the new teacher develop and refine the skills of effective teaching.

ii. Systematic assessment of the Beginning Teacher's performance at the end of each of these years by a team whose membership would be subject to negotiation in each district. After the second assessment, the team would either recommend that the new teacher be advanced to the next

level of the career ladder or that the teacher work to remedy certain specified deficiencies during the third year. If at the end of the third year a teacher had not yet qualified for advancement to the next level of the career ladder, that teacher's contract with the district would be terminated.

b) A minimum of two additional career levels beyond the Beginning Teacher Level. Access to these additional levels would be based primarily upon evaluation of performance as well as upon education and experience. The provisions in the first edition of *A Call to Action*, Section III,A,1, describing a career ladder with Beginning, Professional, Senior, and Leader Teacher levels might be understood as *one example* of what such a career ladder might look like.

c) The primary responsibility of teachers on all career levels would be classroom instruction. Acceptance of non-instructional responsibilities would *not* be required for advancement to *any* level of the career ladder. Teachers above the beginning level could choose to accept non-instructional responsibilities directly related to the improvement of teaching if the local district agreed. Teachers could either accept such responsibilities in addition to their normal teaching loads or could be relieved of a small part of their teaching loads.

d) Annual increases in pay, like promotion on the career ladder, would be based on a mix

of factors, including performance and achievement, education, and experience. The present system of uniform, automatic increments for all teachers with similar education and experience would be modified to provide for variable increments based primarily upon an evaluation of performance as well as upon education and experience.

e) Evaluation must be regular, consistent, and fair, free from arbitrariness, capriciousness, or favoritism. To insure these objectives, the Legislature should establish the basic principles for teacher, administrator, and other professional staff evaluation procedures. The development of each district's detailed evaluation procedures, in accordance with these basic principles, would be determined through negotiation by local educators' associations and local district authorities.

f) Funds provided by the Legislature to fund career ladder programs should be safeguarded against diversion for other purposes.

g) Salary schedules in accord with the career ladder principles stated above would be developed in each district on the basis of local conditions. In all districts for 1984-85 the base salary for Beginning Teachers would be proportional to a full-year contract ranging from $20,000 to $22,000, depending upon level of education and performance. The corresponding salary for a Beginning Teacher on a 192-day contract, for example, would range from $16,000 to $17,855.

2. Length of Contract Year

a) The Legislature should authorize and fund a program to add additional days to teachers' contracts. Districts would determine the use of the additional days, with the objective of insuring that more of the days currently in the school year are used for classroom instruction. Participation in this program would be at the option of each district, as determined in negotiations between districts and local teachers' organizations.

School districts should have flexibility in lengthening teachers' contracts, with the possibility of some teachers choosing contracts calling for fewer and others for more additional days. Salaries would be adjusted according to the length of each teacher's contract year. The Committee recommends an average contract year of 192 days in each district.

b) Contract arrangements for teachers should recognize that, for a growing number of educators, education is a full-time occupation. Indeed, as enrollments increase, a growing number of districts may be expected to conduct school year-round. In each district, some teachers willing to accept additional responsibilities should be offered extended contracts. Contracts might be let for any number of days as a fraction of the base (full year) salary. Teachers could be chosen from all career levels to meet a particular school's needs. The additional responsibilities of teachers on extended contracts might include teaching in summer school, offering courses for gifted or remedial students, conducting professional development programs for other teachers, or developing curricula.

3. **Implementation of Career Ladder and Lengthened Year**

In order to implement the Committee's recommendations the following procedures are proposed:

a) In addition to the increase in salaries provided by the 6% increase in the WPU guarantee recommended by the Committee, all participating districts would extend teachers' contracts to an average of 192 days, with a proportional increase in pay.

b) In districts that choose to adopt a career ladder, all current teachers who receive a contract for 1984-85 should be placed automatically on the new compensation plan at the point nearest their current salary plus the 6% increase, except that no teacher will receive a salary reduction. Teachers may then apply for promotion to higher levels of a district's career ladder.

c) The State Superintendent of Public Instruction should organize an implementation committee to recommend amendments to the school finance laws and administrative procedures for the State Office of Education which will provide for the orderly implementation of these recommendations regarding career ladders and compensation.

New Recommendations

6. **Reduction of Class Size**

   Because class size is one of the most important working conditions affecting the satisfactions of teaching and the quality of instruction, the Committee recommends that the Class Size Reduction program, presently directed toward the first three grades, be reclassified within the School Finance Program from Special Purpose Optional to Special Purpose status and the present funding of $3.5 million be increased by $5 million. Because fall enrollments lower than previously projected have reduced the funds needed to accommodate growth, the Committee believes that this proposal can be funded within the recommended total of $150 million.

7. **Relieving Teachers of Tasks Unrelated to Teaching**

   Because the difficulty of teaching large classes is compounded by the assignment of tasks not related to instruction such as lunchroom supervision, clerical chores, and chaperoning extracurricular events, the Committee recommends that teachers be relieved of such chores. Aides, volunteers, and adequate support staff should assume these responsibilities to allow teachers to commit their time and attention to the teaching.

8. Adequate Supplies for Instruction

Because the best efforts of teachers are hampered by insufficient text books and inadequate supplies, often supplemented at teachers' own expense, the Committee recommends that districts give their highest priority after salaries to instructional materials, particularly text books. Further, district budgeting procedures should be revised to allow greater flexibility in transferring funds from one item to another. Districts should meet their obligations for salaries, instructional materials, and minimum building and operations costs before making any other expenditures.

[*Insert the new recommendations above on page 16.*]

[*Recommendation III,D, Student Competency, pp. 21-22, should be modified in the following manner.*]

4. Partnership of Parents, Students, and the Schools

Because an informed partnership between schools and parents is essential to student achievement, the Committee recommends that schools provide regular, timely information about student progress to parents. Parents should devote careful attention to the progress of their son or daughter in school.

Parents have suggested and schools might consider: sending standardized test results to all parents with an explanation of what the scores mean; providing parents with information about how their son or daughter ranks with the rest of the class; or holding parent-teacher conferences prior to the end of a quarter so that action can be taken by the parent if necessary.

Specific Productivity Measures Requested in A Call to Action

[*Productivity in the Public Schools and Productivity Measures at Colleges and Universities, Section V, pages 28-29, called for specific productivity measures from the State Board of Education and the State Board of Regents which have been added to those sections. The Committee's intent has been clarified in the original text below.*]

A. Productivity in the Public Schools

1. The results achieved by Utah's schools, despite funding per student that is nearly the lowest in the nation, mean that Utah educators have already taken great strides in productivity. But the State's limited resources mean that part of the funding for Utah's growing educational needs must continue to come from further improvements in productivity. Ideally, productivity would mean teaching an increased number of students for the same or fewer dollars while maintaining or raising the quality of education. In practice this is likely to mean maintaining or raising standards while teaching larger numbers of students without fully proportional increases in funding.

   Productivity may, but need not automatically, involve larger classes. Productivity should be measured against the district's *total* cost per student. Given the likely continuation of classes larger than the national average, productivity funds should be used to help teachers conduct their classes more effectively. Productivity programs should be developed in every school district.

2. To fund experimental productivity programs, the Legislature should provide for *up to* $100 to be added to each Weighted Pupil Unit generated by students directly involved in approved productivity studies. Productivity programs would be approved by the State Board of Education which would allocate funds. The total of such approved projects should not exceed $8 million for 1984-85.

Productivity Measures Reported by the State Board of Education:

Productivity programs in public schools might include such measures as the following, already being tried at one or more schools in Utah:

- Providing uncertified auxiliary staff to help certified teachers carry large class loads or high student-teacher ratios.
- Accelerated programs and programs for the gifted and talented which would allow earlier completion of schooling.
- More productive scheduling: self-paced, competency-based instruction which would allow students to complete their course work more quickly; longer, less frequently held classes to reduce time lost in changing classes and in set-up; expanding programs outside the standard school day and year, such as voluntary summer programs, double sessions, and year-round schools.
- Providing funding, incentives, and to financial rewards to programs in proportion their success in raising student achievement.
- Use of technology to offset heavy teaching loads, improve instruction, reduce administrative and clerical costs, and extend specialized instruction to remote areas of the state.

B. Productivity Measures at Colleges and Universities

The colleges and universities have achieved significant productivity gains in recent years and are already using merit evaluation as the primary basis for career ranking and salary adjustments of faculty and staff. Nevertheless, enrollment demands and tight budgets make additional productivity measures necessary. Accordingly, the State

Board of Regents should present specific proposals to the Governor and the Legislature to increase productivity while maintaining or raising the quality of education.

These proposals should address such alternative strategies as increased use of educational technology, development of innovative educational delivery systems, more intensive scheduling of instructional facilities, and curriculum review leading to the possible termination of some high-cost, low yield programs. Similarly, increases in faculty teaching loads should be proposed where educationally wise and consistent with the research mission of higher education.

Productivity Measures Reported by the State Board of Regents

In response to these and other requests, the State Board of Regents has outlined the existing and proposed productivity measures summarized below.

1) **Achievements in Productivity**

Improved productivity must consider both effectiveness—whether a program reaches its objectives—and efficiency—whether it achieves its objectives at the lowest possible cost. By these standards, Utah's nine colleges and universities have significantly increased their productivity in recent years:

- Since 1978, enrollments have *increased* by more than 10,000 students, but, after allowing for inflation, funding per student has *declined* by 14%.
- Faculty spend more hours in class to teach these additional students—working roughly 20% longer than the national average of their colleagues.
- The ratio of students to regular faculty members, already above national norms, has been further increased.

- Since 1977-78, thirty-six low-producing programs have been discontinued and six have been consolidated. The funds released by these changes have been reallocated to other needs.
- Remedial education at the colleges and universities is now offered without credit and at full cost to the student, releasing state funds.
- Cooperative vocational-technical programs, such as partnerships with business and industry and on-the-job training, have reduced state costs.

2. Proposed Productivity Measures

Productivity gains achieved to date reflect a determined policy of working harder and smarter. They have postponed serious losses in quality for a time. But safeguarding current programs will require substantial restoration of the resources lost in recent budget cuts. Increasing productivity and quality will require both increased funding and greater efforts at effective, efficient operations. Reforms must generate a significant share of the resources needed. The measures listed below demonstrate higher education's commitment to the highest quality at the lowest possible cost.

THE HIGHER EDUCATION PRODUCTIVITY PROJECT:

Objectives

a) Make every effort to accommodate all qualified Utah students.

b) Be more productive in providing a quality education for all students; improve programs that prepare students for careers related to the growth and development of the Utah economy.

c) Manage human and financial resources for greater educational results.

Policies to Improve Productivity

a) **Ensure that faculty workloads match increased salaries provided by the Legislature and are above and fully competitive with those of comparable institutions with comparable pay.** Increase the production of credit hours per faculty member by such measures as increasing class sizes, expanding writing and computer literacy programs to help students learn more effectively, increasing teaching loads, and using educational technology such as television courses and computer-assisted instruction.

b) **Make more effective use of all resources available to higher education.**

- Improve the quality and quantity of library collections and instructional equipment to support up-to-date instruction more effectively.
- Revise class schedules to accommodate more students by making more use of facilities in afternoons and evenings and on Saturdays.
- Expand outreach courses offered off-campus in schools and public facilities.
- Expand the use of cost-effective cooperative and clinical education programs and on-the-job training in partnership with business and industry.
- Use the Vocational Education Master Plan, in cooperation with the State Board of Education, to avoid unnecessary duplication and expand vocational training opportunities.
- Reduce, consolidate, or discontinue low-producing and non-essential programs and related courses with low enrollments.

- Review and where possible limit the use of graduate teaching assistants and other part-time faculty members. Revise selection and training procedures for these faculty.
- Hold the funds use for administration and support to a minimum by increasing the productivity of staff in these areas.

c) **Continue to base retention, promotion, and compensation of faculty and staff primarily upon evaluation of performance.**

- Strengthen procedures for reviewing the performance of both tenured and untenured faculty to assure both fairness and rigor.
- Begin or expand career development programs to allow faculty to improve their competence and skills, especially in areas heavily affected by change.

d) **Accelerate students' progress toward their degrees by using challenge testing and advance placement programs to bypass coursework already mastered.**

e) **Insure that students in remedial courses pay all or a significant share of the costs.**